

# MONTHLY NOTICES

## OF THE

### ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.

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J. W. L. GLAISHER, M.A., Sc.D., F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

Lieut. Arthur Mostyn Field, R.N., H.M.S. "Dart";  
 Herbert Ingall, Champion Grove, Champion Hill, S.W.;  
 Henry Addenbrook Wassell, Addenbrook Villa, Love Lane,  
 Stourbridge; and

The Rev. Charles John Young, Stafford Place, Halifax,  
 were balloted for and duly elected Fellows of the Society.

Admiral E. Mouchez, Director of the Observatory, Paris,  
 was balloted for and duly elected an Associate of the Society.

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*Proposed Index to Observations of Variable Stars.* By Professor  
 Edward C. Pickering.

For the last four years the Observatory of Harvard College has published an annual statement of the number of observations made during the previous year upon each variable star. In the fifth of these publications—to be published during 1888—it is proposed to give a statement of the number of dates of observation of each variable star during each year since its discovery. It is hoped that an index of this kind will be useful to astronomers, even if it cannot be made complete; but its value will certainly be much increased by the addition of every extensive list of observations which can be obtained for insertion in it. All who are interested in this department of astronomy are therefore requested to send to this observatory any information of the

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kind above described which they may have at command. It is very desirable that the information should be received early in 1888, in order that the publication may not be unduly delayed.

*Harvard College Observatory, Cambridge, U.S.A.:*  
1887, June 22.

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*On the Parallax of  $61_1$  and  $61_2$  Cygni, as obtained by the aid of Photography.* By Professor C. Pritchard, D.D., F.R.S.

The computations for the parallax of the two components of this historical double star are now completed, subject to some possible slight revision of the numerical work.

Inasmuch as the present communication professes to be nothing more than a preliminary and provisional announcement, perhaps the most interesting form of making it may be to give a short citation from the Report of the astronomical work done at the University Observatory in Oxford during the past year. It will be seen in the sequel that it is not without some importance to add that the Report was approved and adopted by the Vice-Chancellor and other members of the Board of Visitors, including the Astronomer-Royal.

The following is the citation referred to:—

“The somewhat hazardous enterprise of attempting for the first time in the history of astronomy to obtain the distance of fixed stars from our earth by the aid of photography has been attended with success. The final results of the investigation have been placed in my hands only during the writing of this Report. The first observation was obtained on May 26 of last year, and the last was effected on May 31 of the present year. The intermediate computations were systematically continued during the interval. They involved the reduction of no less than 30,000 bisections of star-images, on 330 photographic plates, procured on 89 nights. Eight independent determinations of the parallax of the two components of  $61$  *Cygni* resulted from all this work, and these happily indicate a substantial agreement between themselves, and afford other necessary proof of reliability. Astronomical photography is hereby placed on a secure basis as an efficient and exact exponent of the highest form of astronomical science.

“Simultaneously with these observations similar work has been in progress for the determination of the parallax of  $\mu$  *Cassiopeiae* and *Polaris*. These observations will now be treated on a less laborious scale. The photographic plates of the *Pleiades* have also been taken with the view of obtaining the accurate relative positions of about one hundred stars therein. The necessary triangulations have been commenced.

“The funds granted by the University have been sufficient notwithstanding the continuous activity, which requires a cor-